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NATIONAL LIFE AND NATIONAL TRAINING



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NATIONAL LIFE and NATIONAL TRAINING

**By General
SIR IAN HAMILTON, G.C.B**

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PREFACE

JUST as the gyroscope stands steadier than a rock amidst the cataclysm which overwhelms Imperial Palaces, so our British Constitution is kept in stable equilibrium by the whirligig of parties.

Yet the gyroscope must spin upon something, and to-day a military question of free will or compulsion is being vigorously "pressed" upon us ; a question so profound, so elemental, that it seems as though we may be forced to slow down to examine the platform. And lo, even as we hesitate, a corner of Europe has caught flame !

The encouragement given to this address¹ has been due to the prospect it discloses of a temporary truce between those who, whatever their views about adults, desire our boys to grow up strong,

¹ Since its delivery it has been published in the *Army Review*, and by the courtesy of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office it comes now once more before the curtain.

generous and courageous. Two very different ideals of life and of patriotism are about to engage in a long and dubious struggle over first principles. But, ere we commit ourselves to such a campaign, would it not be wise first to look around and see how far work might be carried on in concert, not conflict; by people, not party? Surely this matter of boy training is just such a non-contentious point! A tug of war if you will, but, for once, let every one be at one end of the rope.

Far into the twentieth century as the eye can penetrate storm and stress lie in wait for our little British Islands and their wonderful living cargo of individuality and liberty. Let us at least train the coming crew and give them a better chance than ourselves of encountering destiny with the gaiety of heart which springs from health and self-confidence. Once our greater Insurance Bill has been fairly passed, those who cry down the credit of the old methods will have gained a first step and their opponents—a clear field and a clear conscience.

IAN HAMILTON.

NATIONAL LIFE AND NATIONAL TRAINING¹

THIS is my hour. You, most rash dwellers in the Midlands, have given me, a plain soldier, command over so much of your time—what can I do in return ?

One thing I can do—a small thing—my best.

Another thing I can, and will, refrain from doing. I will refrain from serving you up a re-hash from libraries and encyclopædias. However poor the stuff, it shall at least come straight from my heart ; hot, strong, and fresh you shall have it.

I propose, Heaven helping me, to talk mainly about the training of boys, and that for two reasons. First, because, although you might not think it to look at me, I once

¹ An Address delivered in the Central Hall, Birmingham, on Tuesday, September 24, 1912.

was a boy myself. So I know a thing or two about *that* business. Secondly, because a British soldier is exposed to great dangers in peace time. During war he is safe; but afterwards, when he comes to be elected, as you have elected me, to be a sort of Queen of the May to a peaceful intellectual festivity, why then he has to be adroit indeed if he is to avoid dancing upon the gouty toes of prejudice.

Big subjects like the future of Democracy, exciting subjects like Votes for Women, are not for such as me. My subject must appear small, whilst, all the time (between you, me, and the gatepost) a boy is only small in just the same sense as an acorn.

Disquisitions as to why such expensive, troublesome creatures as boys are produced in large, though dwindling, numbers must be dispensed with to-night. Assume their existence—small as life and twice as active—skip all interesting introductory phases, and step right on to the inquiry—what is the chief end of boys?

Does a fond British parent wish his young hopeful to beat all others into a cocked hat,

blossom into a Superman and stagger humanity ; or, does he aim at making him a good citizen, carrying on the traditions of his family and his race, standing shoulder to shoulder with his comrades ? A Statesman appointed to deal formatively with the progeny of his fellow-countrymen might have been expected to ask himself first, “ What sort of citizen does our Empire need ? ” But no—we are a rule of thumb people, and although volumes have been written on the value of religious teaching ; on citizenship ; on book-keeping versus poetry ; on piano-playing versus cooking a potato, &c., &c. ; the actual educational machine has not itself been put together with any clear intention of creating a moral drift in any definite direction. To worry over the class of knowledge to be imparted under a curriculum, whilst neglecting the general bias to be created by that curriculum, is much the same as if the staff of the Birmingham Small Arms factory were to quarrel desperately over the precise proportions of lead, nickel, and copper to be used in making a bullet, whilst they left the shape and calibre of its mould entirely

to chance. In the end they might manufacture an admirable projectile, only—it would not fit the ordinary service rifle!

In fact, we have no authoritative ruling as to what psychological principle the twenty millions spent yearly on elementary education are intended to subserve. If the Board of Education has a conscious moral aim at the back of its system, the country is unaware of it. An inquirer is forced indeed, for want of clear guidance as to the deeper meanings of education, to turn to the schools themselves and to work backwards from their results.

The rulers of this Empire, our civil servants, Indian and British, have been evolved by a system of competitive examinations. What is the inner signification of that system? The glorification of the principle of devil-take-the-hindmost. "Come out top!" says the curriculum. "If the other boys get stomach aches or faint away when they see the papers—rejoice!"

But these same imperial rulers of ours were subjected to another influence at school. What was that influence? Why, the influ-

ence of cadet corps, cricket and football teams. What is the inner signification of these influences? They are not identical. Games have only an indirect bearing upon the future of the State; the cadet corps is firmly and clearly based upon a great State requirement. But this they have in common, namely, the constant pressure of an honourable obligation whereby each individual is bound to deny himself distinction whenever an associate is better qualified or better placed to achieve the same result. "Help that boy," says the unwritten code; "he is your comrade: help him somehow: help him anyhow. If he gets hurt—save him; if he loses heart—encourage him!"

Here are the two diametrically opposed principles under which most of the existing generation who count have been trained. To-day we are on the verge of a third method: that of keeping careful records of the words, acts, and behaviour of a boy, and of letting the time of his quitting school be a rehearsal on the small scale of the great final Day of Judgment. In so far as this third method aims at broadening the category of qualifica-

tions upon which selection is based, it is good. Also it may act, to some extent, as a corrective to the too great want of appreciation on the part of a boy of how hard some act committed when he was fourteen will hit him at forty. But there is a truly poisonous side to it unless it is to be administered by men whose sympathy equals their knowledge of the boy.

Now I wish you very much, each one of you, to do what the Minister of Education might have done in 1869, or in some subsequent year. I wish you to consider to what quality in the boy's heart do you appeal when you subject him to—

- (1) A competitive examination.
- (2) The record test.
- (3) The influence of a cadet corps.

My own suggested answers are—

- (1) Selfishness.
- (2) Slyness.
- (3) Sympathy.

With such opposing influences now hard at work upon the rising generation, it is a matter of life and death to us to know which most prevails, but departmental files will be

ransacked in vain for information. Turn then to the vile body—to the small boy himself—and ask him what he thinks of—

(1) The competitive superboy.

(2) The boy with the best record.

(3) The boy sergeant or corporal in the cadet corps.

If he is an average, healthy-minded boy and in an expansive mood, he may perhaps condescend to explain to you that the wretched beast (1) is a swat; that (2) is a sneak; but that (3) (here his tone becomes hushed, his expression solemn) is one of the greatest men that ever lived.

Actually then, the boy surpassed in a selfish race for place, or in the art of humbugging, the Head Master, despises his conquerors: the boy cadet reveres his superior. There is a native, generous instinct in boys leading them rather to join hands than to jump on one another's shoulders. Here I am convinced the British boy is only an epitome of the British man. Take Rugby and Coventry close by. Ask some of your friends in the Territorial Howitzer Brigade their opinions of managers or foremen linked to

them only by the liens of competitive industrialism; then ask them what they think of other managers or foremen who happen to be officers in their batteries. You may find a latent hostility characterize the former relations; the latter are always, in my experience, absolutely open and cordial. Our commercial and political systems are ever working, like our educative system, towards throat-cutting, but day-by-day, the wounds we thus deal to one another are being salved and bandaged by organizations either frankly military like the Territorial Force, or framed on a military pattern like Boys' Brigades, Church Lads' Brigades, B.-P. Scouts, and the Salvation Army.

The question up to the Nation to settle—and the opinion of Birmingham goes a long way always towards such settlements—is, whether we should not take stock of our educational system in order to determine whether it is not full time for the State to step in frankly and support unselfish as against selfish influences. We can hardly hope to exclude competition, to annihilate ambition, or to side-track examinations; it might not

be a good thing to do even if we could. Individualism—call it even selfishness if you will—is a positive quality, and as such the great motive power of humanity. But excess of individualism becomes a disruptive force, rendering co-operation impossible, and it is this excess of a thing, good in moderation, I am tilting against when I ask you if we might not fairly try and reinforce the public-spirited, patriotic side of school life.

Take the three great factors—mind, character, body. Since the year 1870 we have very seriously striven to develop the minds of our boys and that with a success almost startling. As a soldier I had an intimate knowledge of our rank and file during the wars of the period 1879–1886. I know something of them to-day. There is no comparison possible between the minds of the two generations. The people have responded marvellously to their opportunities. A recruit of 1912 can comprehend in an hour or two what it took him a couple of days to grasp in the early eighties. During the same period, character and physique have officially

been relegated to the background of the lecture hall. Any positive encouragement they have received has been unofficial; through the unconscious agency of amateurs of games and the conscious agency of those boy idealists who have raised cadet and scout corps. What is the result? As to character, it seems to some of our older officers that, willing and intelligent as the modern lads may be, they have hardly the same firm basis of grit to work upon as in former times; whilst, as to physique, it is an open question whether the men of the twentieth century would hold their own with the soldiers who marched from Kabul to Kandahar, or struggled in little boats, 500 to 700 miles, up the Nile and its terrible cataracts, to the relief of Gordon.

These are my own views as to the decline of character during one generation, and I confess I attach more importance to them than to the findings of Commissions, Royal or otherwise. For Commission reports, being by the nature of their being compromises, are apt to be flabby, half-hearted things. Still sometimes the stupidity is so

flagrant that even a mixed body manages to find voice to speak out. Hearken to the recent comment of the Poor Law Commission :—

“ Our expensive elementary education system, which is costing £20,000,000 a year, is having no effect on poverty ; it is not developing self-reliance or forethought in the characters of the children.”

But why *should* these £20,000,000 develop character ? No one has tried to turn a ha’penny of the money to that account. Yet there is no reason—no reason whatever—why we should lose either character or physique because we develop brain. Not a whit. The three ought to go hand-in-hand. There is no valid reason why we should not have done as much for the characters and bodies of our race during the past forty years as we undoubtedly have done for their minds. Here is a proof. During that same period, despite a war which has carried off thousands of their tallest and strongest, the Japanese —“ by taking thought ”— have raised the height of their race a full half-inch, and put as much on to the width of their chests. What they have done with their

characters we shall not know till her next war is on her, but, in view to the physique, we may guess !

So far my address has been in the nature of a preface, showing what education is actually doing ; how it concentrates itself upon the selfish side of the intellect, leaving the development of character, communal spirit, and physique to the influence of unrecognized agencies. I think it is Ruskin who expatiates somewhere on the marvellous thing it would be if lessons in book-learning should entirely supersede lessons in the bayonet exercise. Well, we have tried it in our schools for forty years, and the want of the shoulder-to-shoulder work is beginning to find us out ! Now let me come to suggested action, and earnestly submit for your favourable consideration the idea that we should revise our educational methods and aims, so that when we send boys to school it should be the object to stamp upon their plastic minds a unifying principle of life to embody twin conceptions.

A conception of the State in peace, and of the every-day duties of a citizen.

A conception of the State in danger, and of the last ultimate duty of a citizen.

The old ramparts of our Empire are sadly in need of pointing with these cements. Germans or Japanese are much more conscious of the life of the State than we British. Not that I would copy Germans or Japanese. I am no more in favour of extreme communism than I am in favour of extreme individualism; less so, indeed, where our own naturally individualistic, freeborn race is concerned. Each Japanese lives as one of a swarm: he is a servant of the hive; he is this—knows it, and feels it always. An Englishman is England: consciously personifies it: if it were not for him—no England. He stands for what England represents, like Doyle's Soldier of the Buffs. His attitude is fine, but its defects are becoming too pronounced, and it creates too many enemies.

How shall we make head? *Not* by any belated copying of methods alien to our race. Zarathustra saw many lands, many peoples; and he discovered that whereas "no people could live without first valuing," it is equally true that, "if a people will maintain itself,

it must not value as its neighbour valueth." Thousands in our islands see the danger, but do not see that salvation must come from within. They have so little pride in a most singular, an entirely unprecedented past, that they do not scruple to say, "If we are a peculiar people we must be wrong." They exaggerate the mote in their own eye; they perceive not the beam in that of their brother. Now, I suggest to you that we are menaced by a real danger just at the present period of our national existence. I do not specially or directly refer to war with firearms and torpedoes; I mean the danger incurred by any social system which does not keep itself fluid and most sensitive to the ceaseless ebb and flow of the great tides of world civilization. This does not imply that we must copy foreign models of attaining wisdom, prosperity, and safety. No; but it does imply that we must give our own characteristics a fair chance by furbishing up our well-tried weapon of voluntary individual effort, whilst tempering it with just a touch—no more—of that communism which pulls a nation together. To attain such an object,

the first step (and it is the first step that counts) is to see that to each British boy is brought home, by a practical object lesson, a clear realization of the ultimate duty of each adult male citizen. So may our whole force yet become available for a common national object, not by outside command, but in obedience to the will residing in each individual. We want the velocity and fire of individualism, plus the momentum and cohesion of communism. Life and death do not differ more than a result achieved by free will and a result enforced by law. Plant a seed into the mind of a boy: you may produce an organic growth—a real, living force. Order a grown man to do something: you have produced a mechanical effect, lasting just so long as lasts the artificial pressure: like a watch he ceases to work so soon as you cease to wind him up. Whereas the seed in the living mind may flourish like an oak 500 years after the death of the sower and may then leave a whole forest to bear impressive testimony to his act.

Fundamentally, our voluntary system is conceived on right lines but, actually, we

must learn to focus our efforts or we perish. To play cricket you need concentration. Worry about the National Debt and assuredly you lose your set of lawn tennis. And we are beginning to be beaten also at the Olympic games. Remember that "no nation can last which has made a mob of itself however generous at heart." But if we can stamp a clear-cut, vivid conception of the State on to the generous young hearts we still own by the million, we will have created a living force (not a dead machine such as any tyrant may produce compulsorily)—a living force which no enemies, no armies or navies, can ever definitely subdue. On such a basis the virtues of citizenship may be well and truly laid. On any other, they must be founded on shifting sand. How is such an idea to be engraved on the millions of school-boy hearts? Easily enough, should you so wish it and have the courage of your convictions. Birmingham has only to say "make it so," and lo, the thing is made! Warwick the Kingmaker lived in the suburbs of this city; Joe Chamberlain, the Empire maker, still lives in them. If I could only convince

you, you would very quickly convince the Kingdom. There is life—energy—in Birmingham sufficient to vitalize a moribund country, let alone a country suffering mainly from somnolence. You have only to be persuaded that cohesion and unity of purpose may be imparted to the whole of boy life in Great Britain, and then, hey, presto! by showing a little of your accustomed high courage in face of a few fanatics the object accomplishes itself! I do not underrate the power of these fanatics. Fanatics are always dangerous. But I am a fanatic too—one of those who tries to stick to his guns—and I say to you, open your eyes, be bold, be honest. School cadets corps, boys' brigades, church lads' brigades, and boy scouts have a direct bearing on war and on the defence of the country. Those serving in them are not playing a silly game. They are doing something quite intensely real; more real perhaps than the things the fathers and mothers of those cadets and scouts are doing. The knowledge that they are doing something real and preparing themselves to come forward in England's darkest hour, and die for

her, would be refreshment for their souls ; a fruitful idea, full of camaraderie and fellowship and brotherly love—*they are not allowed to entertain it!* The insistence that drill, scouting, first aid to the wounded, are meaningless exercises, that they have nothing to do with real bloody war ; that the boys taking part in them are like so many blank cartridges noisily engaged in make-believe—all this amounts to a deliberate rejection of the finest education that can be put into any boy's head—the idea namely that each male citizen holds his life only in fief for his country.

Why not be frank even with the 8 per cent. of our total boy population already organized into corps and brigades ? Why not tell the simple truth—that truth children so earnestly, persistently seek and so seldom get—and tell them that the State sets the highest value, some seventy or eighty millions per annum to put it in terms of cash, upon the acquisition of the arts of attack and defence ; that it only continues to exist by being able to call upon proficient in these arts ; that every hour boys spend in learning to fight

means so much influence to their nation—to the best nation—in the counsels of the world, and so much additional security to their own mothers and sisters? Why not? Because many of the amateurs—the boy idealists—who have started these corps are so afraid of the opinions of some of their wealthy supporters that they hesitate to countenance so much as the word corporal. A boy corporal, so it seems, is likely to develop into a man of blood!

In England at present we have two sets of earnest well-intentioned people at work on this matter—at work, but not quite sincerely. We have the enthusiasts who entice boys into corps by using the panoply of war as a bait, intending all the time to turn them into plaster saints; we have the enthusiasts who pretend they are only going to improve the health of the dear boys by giving them physical exercises, intending all the time to turn them into soldiers. Both sets pave their path with good intentions, but the further their brigades and corps tramp down it, the more ominously will hollow reverberations show that their organizations are

founded upon something less solid than the truth.

What remedies have we? Honesty is the best—the only remedy. Look things fair and square in the face and press for compulsory cadet training in all schools, public or private. The majority of the voters want it and they ought to have their way.

No keener advocate of the value of voluntary effort as opposed to effort under compulsion exists, I suppose, than myself. But bear in mind the gulf fixed between a boy and an adult. From the days of King Solomon onwards, the principle of compulsion, even violent compulsion, has been freely accepted as far as the behaviour and mental education of boys is concerned. With school-boys in question any moral objection to compulsion, *qua* compulsion, must be logically absurd. I would apologize for labouring a point so obvious were it not that we have had it said, even in our legislature, that compulsion applied to boys and to adults is very much the same thing. Indeed, the sincerity of my own advocacy of voluntary service

for grown men has been impeached on the ground that I had advocated compulsory cadet training. So I must try and make my point plain.

Voluntary effort, then, is a live, self-contained quality. But it is not spontaneous, any more than life itself is spontaneous. Others have originally conceived it and generated it. Like any animate existence, it must have had a beginning—a birth. The fathering and mothering may have been unconscious. In that case we describe the process by which the faculty for voluntary effort gains strength by the word “imitation”; but whenever we want to force the pace of a child, so as to enable it to surpass its own parents and their circle, we are bound, except in the rare case of a precocious genius, to fall back upon compulsion in the first instance. The grasses of a pastoral farm will go on reproducing themselves and slowly improving so long as they are properly looked after; but if you desire to change the quality of your grass, you must scarify the ground with plough and harrow, and on that wounded surface sow fresh seed. Suppose we

want to elevate the examination-fostered quality of self-seeking into social service—into a talent of citizenship? Well, the slow process of imitation will not do; first, because, practically, there are none to imitate; that variety of Anglo-Saxon has been examined out of existence; secondly, because we have not time—we are in a desperate hurry. We must begin at once; next year let us hope. What, then, is left to us? Only the plough. We have first to plough and harrow with compulsion, next to sow the seed of camaraderie, and then carefully to cultivate. Were there neither competitors nor menace we could afford to relegate this task of leavening the vast lump of selfishness, slackness, and anæmia to the efforts of the small band of amateur enthusiasts who are now giving real education to some 8 per cent. of our boys—the number of boys I mean now enrolled in corps having *some* sort of military flavour with them, from the B.P. Scouts at one end of the scale to corps recognized by Territorial Force County Associations at the other. *But there is no time.* We must help General Baden-Powell by giving him

school-trained disciplined boys to work upon with his voluntary system. If the wolf is actually knocking at the door of Red Riding Hood's grandmother, the old lady must pull up her stockings, and look precious smart about it too! We all hear that fatal knock. Some shudder—others smile—others again propose remedies tantamount to setting the cottage in a blaze to scare away the monster with the big mouth and long gleaming teeth. No one has yet suggested action acceptable or accepted by practical politicians. Yet, assuredly, if you forget that action and initiative are the only valid answers to menace, it will be even as if you yourselves had said, "Pull the bobbin and the latch will go up." That wolf will take tea with you, make a muffin of you, within the next few years. I am not talking war now—not yet—not necessarily of war with arms. We dare not dawdle. We dare not trifle any longer. The State must move, now, at once, in a bigger matter—a more revolutionary matter than Corn Laws or Reform Bills or Home Rule—I say bigger, more revolutionary, because it is a matter in which lies

a germ that may colour the legislation of all time. Every single healthy boy in Great Britain must henceforth be trained in character and physique just as carefully and thoroughly as he is now trained to read and to write ; and, whereas the sauce with which education has hitherto been served is, be clever and you will become rich, be rich and you will become happy, the new cult will start from the axiom, that it is only by the strength of a State that the well-being and happiness of its members can be secured. Strength, the new boys must be taught, depends less upon the cleverness or wealth of individuals than upon their spirit of cohesion ; their determination to stand by one another ; their common desire to remain pioneers of the world's progress in the future, as they have been in the past, and upon their fixed, fervid resolve to die upon the field of battle rather than let any one rob them by force, or jockey them by foul play, out of the fulfilment of so legitimate and honourable an ambition.

There are, I know, people—some of them the salt of the earth—who believe that the

millennium will be a state of every one giving way to every one else ; who would like Great Britain to set a good example by yielding—by adopting a Fear-all policy instead of a gallant Dreadnought policy. Why then did not the Omnipotent and His Archangels throw away their arms and compound with Satan,

“ That led th’ embattled Seraphim to war ” ?

Where would we all be then ? Saving your presences—in hell ! But, luckily, instead of arbitration proposals we had, as pious Milton tell us, the swift-winged Cherubim flying and crying through high heaven, the tremendous words “ *Krieg mobil.* ”

“ Arm, warriors, arm and fight ; the foe is at hand,” he cried, and then, loud sounded the ethereal trumpet through heaven’s high battlements, breathing into the Angelic host,

“ Heroic ardour to adventurous deeds
Under their God-like leaders.”

Or, should you think the allegory too fantastic, leave Milton and his angels and drop down to the *Daily Mail* and the Putumayo

Indians. These very nice people (the Indians I mean) carried their complaisance to such a pitch that the moment they vexed any one they prepared their persons for a whipping and lay down so as to save all trouble. Have they as a result made the world a better, brighter, happier planet? On the contrary, they have incited fellow-men to the blackest, most barbarous crimes. They are accessories before the fact to their own murders.

On one memorable day in a newly-conquered land the idea first struck me that the people had been themselves to blame, not only for their own miseries, but for the rough behaviour of others. I think of this day sometimes when I see naïve statements by people ignorant of war that working men would be in much the same position if their fatherland had been invaded as they were before. It is the behind part of the business they overlook. Now what had those poor inoffensive men in the street of my experience done to deserve being kicked into all the gutters of their own capital? Nothing! Well then, they deserved all they got.

That is the law of the jungle, called by purists international law. Bullies do not make cowards. Cowards make bullies. A book like the *Great Illusion*, with its revelation of a capitalist bellowing to his golden calf for succour, a book like that, is an encouragement, an incentive, to every foreign swash-buckler in the world to have a go at us. Take your seventy millions from the fighting services to spend in middle-age pensions; not we, but some other fellows, would have the handling of the cash. No use facing the devil with soft words. Sharp sword and stout shield are what has caused Apollyon to give back ever since Christian took the narrow road. Pallas Athene, the Goddess of Wisdom, is always represented wearing a helm of proof. Weigh well the significance of this beautiful symbol bequeathed to us by the experience of a mighty civilization. The strength of a State can only be drawn from bitter self-sacrifice and harsh duty. If then you desire strength, frame the minds of the coming generation round a picture wherein self-sacrifice and duty predominate. Do not imagine you work in any way for

righteousness when you teach little boys to be afraid—to lead anæmic little lives—to hope and pray they may escape all concern with strife—to think they can stand outside it and disarm warriors by waving palm branches. Red Riding Hood's grandmother was *so* slack and lazy, lying in bed for breakfast, that she was *bound to be* eaten up by the wolf. In up-to-date editions of the story, the wolf is cut open and the grandmother lies safe and sound in his stomach. Apart from the presumption of mangling a classic, this new nambypamby tag to the tale is untruthful and cowardly, though also, alas, perfectly typical of the attitude of modern education towards the struggle of life. Be lazy, take breakfast in bed—chance the wolf at the door—the State will save you in the end. Yes, but what is to save a State that thus deliberately blunts the rowels of necessity's spur? By such miserable evasions, education does what it can to transform boys of good fighting breed into those silly, woolly, lambkins who bleat to eagles that eating mutton is bad. Train the little beggars to grow horns and then the eagles, whether

one or two headed, may begin to think of turning vegetarians.

Thus far I have mainly had the State in time of peace at the back of my mind. I have suggested—to such an audience I need not do more:—

(a) A course of military training for all boys as the best antidote to excess of individualism. The cadet corps as part of our school curriculum giving cohesion to the nation.

(b) Military training giving definite shape to a sense of citizenship now vague and formless. The cadet corps serving as a constant object lesson in the subservience of the boy to the group—of the group to the company.

(c) The necessity, as a first step, of being honest with ourselves and with the boys. A halt to be called in the practice of pretending that cadet corps are aiming at nothing more serious than physical drill.

So much for my conception of the State of peace. From here onwards I propose to

lean rather towards the second conception—that of the State in danger.

In the palmy days of Athens and Rome military service was accounted a high privilege. Slaves, malefactors, and non-enfranchised were jealously excluded from the profession of arms. Infinite pains were taken to impress upon the minds of the rising generation the great idea of each male citizen's personal responsibility for the State, and the boy's ever-present sense that he was an instrument to be tuned up to the performance of a duty so sacred shed an enchantment of high romance over the education of young Athens and Rome. At Rome as at Athens, a military training ground was set aside for the schools, but the actual exercises were carried out very much on individual lines, veterans of former campaigns accounting it an honour to instruct a boy in wielding the sword and in hurling the *pilum*.

“At Athens the youth of the country was, on reaching the age of eighteen, paraded in the national theatre and there solemnly sworn in to the service of the State, his name being at the same time placed on the rolls of his *phyle*; at seventeen the Roman boy first came under the Censor's

cognisance, and was by him entered as a junior on the musters of his local century, which represented at once the smallest political, as well as military, unit in the constitution."

The aim of these wise Greeks and Romans was to drive home the principle that political power in peace carried with it always a personal obligation to fight in war. Looking back, it is easy to see that here was the sheet anchor of the two republics—that so long as it held good they could ride out any storm—that when it weakened they began to drift towards the breakers. Not only did the fact that every voter was equally exposed to a common danger in war time give a feeling of fraternity, and thus lend stability, but it also permeated the ranks of the army itself with the fire of patriotic devotion. So came it to pass that Marathon was :—

“ Won by the unambitious heart and hand
Of a proud, brotherly and civic band.”

So it came to pass that Rome was able to lose the battles of the Ticenus, the Trebia, the Trasimene Lake and Cannœ, together with 120,000 men and the whole of the South of Italy without blenching. So it

came that in the long run she was able to win Zama, and with it the world.

Could we do this? Anyway we've got to try to do it. Greater Britain of to-morrow will require just as much zeal and self-sacrifice from its sons as Athens and Rome obtained from their sons in the olden times. How can we set about it—how unite the various currents of British life into one broad channel? Why, by following, before it is too late, the example of Athens and Rome. In our upper-class schools games may do something to promote a feeling of unity and fraternity. But what possible sentiment of camaraderie or cohesion can be produced by doing lessons in competition with one another in a not very attractive building situated in a very mean street! Give the poor boys at such an establishment the chance of considering themselves the Two Thousand and Second—the Old Kent Road cadet company—and a very different spirit would at once begin to associate itself with their training. By taking boys at an impressionable age and by teaching them in a vital, tangible way—

in a way they can fully understand—in the *only way* they can fully understand—the ultimate duty of a voter. As well preach to the wind as lecture a boy about patriotism unless you make words good by entrusting him with a bit of patriotic work—unless you consent to a part of the schooltime you pay for being devoted to unselfish preparation for the performance of unselfish duty. Failing this, the flag hoisted over the schoolhouse will remain an emblem; the word war itself will sound in his ears as a far-fetched metaphor. Tell him he may have to die for his country, his mind, as likely as not, travels back to some little dog he once saw fall down upon its back when this phrase was repeated to it. The noblest phrases are now fast becoming hollow for want of the smallest sign of action behind the talk. Ideas *in vacuo* are ideas sterilized. Let a boy see his parents and guardians seriously teaching him how to get full value for his life, when the day comes for him to lay it down in defence of all he holds most dear—his whole attitude towards that life will assume a new significance—he will feel

himself a brother to all Britishers; a protector to all his weaker brethren. Milton, that religious, noble-minded Englishman, has bequeathed us his ideas on education. This is what he says: "I call a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously, all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." What single step do our ungenerous schools take to fulfil the last essential when they launch boys by the million into the world unable to load, much less fire, a rifle!

I am aware that the analogy of Athens and Rome is not complete—that the Author of *Paradise Lost* may be considered old-fashioned. After all, Athens and Rome perished. Yes, but not until they had long given up that feature in their system of educating their youth which had aimed at rendering them, humanly speaking, unconquerable. It may be urged that the passage of some two thousand years, or even of 250 years, must weaken the force of my authorities; but human nature has not changed much during that period, and assuredly the world we inhabit

to-day is much more thoroughly prepared and organized for splendid battles on the largest scale than the old worlds of Milton, of Marathon or Cannœ. Still, a more up-to-date instance is available, and I now turn from Athens and Rome to Pietermaritzburg.

About this time last year I found myself in Natal. The Garden of South Africa it is called, and rightly so, for its people lead the world in cultivating what is best worth culture—the characters and bodies of their youth. I speak advisedly. Natal has stood alone in the world for the past twenty years in enforcing by the law of the land a real, thorough military training for all boys in her Government and State-aided schools. The few private schools are also embraced by the system, and receive ungrudging help in organizing and maintaining corps. When I say that Natal has stood absolutely alone, I do not forget that after 1870 the French introduced compulsory military training into their State schools; but either the system was not well conceived or administered, or else the French boy's temperament

does not readily assimilate discipline. Certain it is that, in France, the forebodings of those who feared Chauvinism were to some extent realized. As one of the witnesses testified in a State inquiry, "the ambition of each cadet was to swear and expectorate after the most approved fashion," and the "children who had been created corporals and sergeants tyrannized over the others." Neither French schoolmasters nor French military authorities had a good word to say for the experiment, and after a few years' trial it was dropped. The field was thus left open to Natal, and, as I said before, she stands alone as having for more than twenty years enforced wholesale military training, including musketry on open ranges, upon all the boys in the country.

There is no secret about the organization, curriculum, or cost of these cadets, and any one making application in Natal can easily provide themselves with a copy of the regulations and standing orders for the corps. Financial aspects may similarly be studied in annual estimates. I will therefore content myself with outlining as

simply as possible the main features of the scheme.

In Natal, cadets are organized in two categories : senior cadets and school cadets. The senior corps consist of youths of European parentage, aged between 14 and 18, who have left school and voluntarily enlist in a senior cadet unit. As senior cadets are a voluntary organization, and as there are many such in all parts of the world, I do not propose to take up your time by saying more about them.

School cadets include every schoolboy in Natal over the age of 10. They are obliged to serve by law. For discipline and training they are under the control of a Commander of Cadets, himself subordinate to the Commandant of Militia.

Efficiency requirements are met by attendance at 30 drills of not less than an hour's duration ; by one week in camp per annum, plus a regular course of musketry on an outdoor range for boys over 14 years of age. For the musketry course an annual allowance is made to each cadet of a hundred rounds of ball and fifty rounds of blank.

Extra ammunition up to a maximum of 100 rounds per rifle may be bought at half price from the Ordnance Department. The uniform worn is a Service pattern cap, a dark blue jersey, knickerbockers, and stockings to match. Where parents can afford the outlay it is the cadet's own property. The kit is very smart, and the wearing several times a week of such a turn-out by boys whose parents cannot afford to dress them smartly raises the little chaps in their own estimation and also therefore in the social scale.

The headmasters of schools are not often officers of the cadet corps, but they zealously acquit themselves of the other military responsibilities imposed upon them. All non-commissioned officers are drawn from the ranks and a good deal of authority is delegated to these boy non-commissioned officers. Promotion to corporal or sergeant is eagerly sought after by the boys, and many a Prime Minister takes his duties less seriously. The annual recurring expenditure of the State works out, per cadet, as follows:—

| | £ | s. | d. |
|--|-------|----|-----------------|
| Administration, clothing, instruction, and training | 1 | 3 | 8 |
| One week in camp | 1 | 5 | 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ |
| In addition, for cadets over 14 years of age— | | | |
| Ball ammunition (100 rounds) | 0 | 11 | 8 |
| Blank ammunition (50 rounds) | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| | <hr/> | | |
| Total for each cadet over 14 | 3 | 3 | 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ |
| | <hr/> | | |

Cadets under 14 cost £2 9s. per annum.

Thus it will be seen that the State-trained cadet is not less expensive than the cadet belonging to some voluntary and private organization like the Boys' Brigade or the Church Lads' Brigade. From the point of view of State finance he is, of course, a far more expensive product. But Great Britain could for many reasons do the business much cheaper than Natal. I will come to this immediately, meanwhile I trust you will forgive my little dose of dry detail, but an address without facts is like a balloon without ballast; it shoots away into cloud-land and is never heard of again.

So much for the actual Natal organization. Now, I have to tell you about its moral and

material effects. First, the technical and physical results, as they are indisputable and undisputed. Not a schoolmaster in Natal but agrees that his boys have greatly benefited in physique, mental grip, and general capacity, by their long, steady course of discipline and drill. How, indeed, should it be otherwise? It may not be easy to prove capacity by statistics; but physique can be tested and recorded. Doctor Arkle examined all the children in all grades of Liverpool schools. Boys of fourteen, in schools where games and open-air work were carried on, stood 61·7 inches in height and weighed 94·5 lbs. In schools for the poor, in airless slums, where games and healthy outdoor exercises were impossible, boys of the same age stood 55·2 inches in height and weighed 71·1 lb. And yet, because we teach all classes equally in mind, we have the effrontery or stupidity to talk of equal opportunities for all! On parade I found the Natal cadets well turned out; steady in the ranks; quick, smart and workmanlike. When corps marched past they stepped together freely and boldly; heads up, swinging

along, mighty proud to be marching along shoulder to shoulder. The shooting was excellent, and the keenness for musketry generated on the school ranges is usually retained by ex-cadets in after-life. Drills are carried out at times which would otherwise be devoted to school sports, yet the present generation of boys only show surprise, mingled with good-humoured pity, to any one asking whether such an allotment of hours is popular. The idea that duty is duty and has no truck with popularity or unpopularity has evidently taken firm root. Any boy failing to throw himself heartily into his military work is regarded by his comrades as a "slacker," just as much as if he were to fight shy of cricket and football. The outward and visible signs of the compulsory cadet system I place in the following order. Discipline, self-restraint, good manners, cleanliness, physical development, some useful military aptitudes, including powers of command amongst the cadet non-commissioned officers.

Once I leave the military aspect and come to the moral effect I enter upon a broken,

foggy region where I am liable to challenge at any moment. All I can do here is to give you my impressions. Judging by the Natal analogue there is no danger that militarism—or its bastard child, Jingoism—will emerge from any compulsory cadet cadre established amongst Anglo-Saxons. Not one single Natalian, of the many I questioned, would admit the possibility of such a thing. Nor did I myself see a sign of it. True, public opinion was healthily stimulated into concerning itself with defence questions, but nowhere was there a sign of its being deflected towards pugnacity. Neither is it likely that it should be so! The pugnacious citizen is the man to whom war means tuppence a pound extra tax on his tea, and lots of exciting items in the newspaper. The true anti-militarist is the man who has learnt how to fight and to whom war means just simply leaving all and following the drum. The tendency of cadet training is to subject every able-bodied male to the sobering consideration that he, personally, may have to pay for it—not through the spout of his teapot, but through his own nose—not by a higher

income tax, but by his widow pocketing his life insurance proceeds. The Natalians, then, are not pugnacious, even if they do possess a quickened sense of nationality and of respect for the flag. When the Act for the Union of South Africa was under discussion it became quite evident that Natal set a higher value on her own independent existence than did any other part of South Africa. So intense was the feeling that it actually endangered the Union. Now, however inconvenient local patriotisms may occasionally prove, it is they, and they alone, that impart life to an imperial organism—as may be seen in Natal by the respect invariably paid there to the Union Jack.

As to sheer military strength, the case is, if not stronger, at least more easy to demonstrate. For some years before the Act of Union, public opinion in Natal had compelled practically every healthy male to serve for a period “voluntarily” in the active militia. If he failed to do so, the women and his old comrades of the school cadet corps marked him down as a shirker. To him Natalian Deborahs would turn and say, “What man

is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? Let him go and return into his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart." Here are the effects as reflected in a comparison of the citizen forces of Natal with those in other portions of the British Overseas Dominions :—

| | European population. | " Active Militia " and Volunteers. | Percentage of population serving in citizen forces. |
|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Canada | 7,184,000 | 46,742 | ·65 |
| Australia | 4,334,630 | 22,267 | ·51 |
| New Zealand | 1,029,417 | 12,929 | 1·25 |
| Cape Colony | 610,680 | 3,990 | ·65 |
| Natal | 91,443 | 2,597 | 2·84 |
| Southern Rhodesia | 23,000 | 1,035 | 4·5 |
| Transvaal | 297,277 | 4,326 | 1·45 |

In these figures only the numbers of citizen soldiers actually under engagement to be trained in peace are included. Reservists, members of rifle clubs, of volunteer rifle companies, and of semi-military bodies who

do no military training in peace have purposely been excluded.

Statistics for the United Kingdom are not given, as there the question of the numbers willing to serve in peace is complicated by the existence of professional naval and military forces. Significant, however, is the fact that in Great Britain the number of citizen soldiers, even including the special reserve, works out at well under 1 per cent. of the total population. Had we the same percentage of our population serving in the citizen forces as Natal, our voluntarily enlisted Territorials would stand at over a million!

Excepting only Rhodesia, where conditions are abnormal and exceptional, Natal holds place of pride in Anglo-Saxondom as regards the number of her men who in peace are willing to devote time to undertaking military duties.

I have shown you what Natal has done. You have only to look in the papers to see that Australia, New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa are following her example. As to Canada, her Defence Minister has just told us that it would be well worth the while

of any State to impart military cadet training to its sons even if no such thing as war existed! Are we going to be the last? I think so, but better late than never, and here is an outlined sketch showing how we might at least make a beginning.

We can work much more cheaply than Natal. Whereas it costs £1 5s. 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in South Africa to send a boy cadet for one week to camp, here it only costs us 16s. to give a boy ten days under canvas, provided his transport does not come to more than half-a-crown. Our administration, clothing, instruction, and training would also be proportionately cheaper.

There exist in the United Kingdom and in Ireland 758,000 boys aged twelve and under fourteen. To equip these boys and give them a thorough *diem ex die*, two years' course of military training in their schools would cost £380,000 per annum. The sum is reliable. It is a careful adaptation worked out upon the experiences of New Zealand. To give all these boys in addition a ten days' camp would bring the total cost up to something not far short of a million, just 5 per cent. in fact on the

amount we already spend upon elementary education.

Look a little deeper into the problem. Here is another of its aspects. Drop for a moment the notion of summer military camps for slum-bred boys. Regard this as a sentimentalist's dream, as the extravagant, imaginative orgy of an idiot. Stick to plain military administration, instruction, and training. Well, we have also in the United Kingdom and Ireland one-and-a-half million lads aged fourteen and under eighteen. Working on Australian and Natalian figures, continuation military training for these lads would cost a pound a head per annum. Excluding camps then, the whole of the youth of Great Britain and Ireland aged twelve and under eighteen could be trained and, literally and metaphorically, put upon their feet for a little more than two millions per annum. A thought winged with glory. The coming Rulers of the British Empire, every one of them, during the crucial years from twelve to eighteen having their backbones straightened by drill and stiffened by the inspiration of State service. There would be a programme

indeed ! But the citadels of selfishness and ignorance are far too strong to be carried in one such splendid rush. Begin at the beginning. I will trace out for you the alignment of the first parallel.

Concentrate on the inclusion in Estimates of £380,000 wherewith to begin next Spring the cadet training, organized and standardized on the Australasian plan, of the 758,000 boys aged twelve and under fourteen. An amendment to the Education Act must provide for the expenditure of this sum. Under the terms of that amendment teachers will become the cadet corps officers, receiving such help as is necessary from retired non-commissioned officers. The War Office would advise and inspect.

Such inspections would prove to be the salvation of our race. Let who will stand by, hands in pockets, cigarette in mouth, whilst sheer neglect condemns millions of the coming generation to creep through life with lowered vitality ; let who will thus betray their most sacred trust—the Great General Staff would insist that boys for whom they were in any way responsible should be

given a chance of marching forward, heads erect, drums beating, and colours flying. Never for one moment would a soldier Inspector General endure the tens of thousands of weak eyes, incipient deafness, rotten teeth, relaxed throats, adenoids, hammer toes, flat feet, knock knees, now disfiguring our elementary schools. Directly he got hold of the boys he would call in the Army Medical Department, and what with surgery and drill, the sons of the nation would begin to get some of that fair start, that stock of surplus stamina, which is the only scientific health insurance. Does a gardener lavish his too exiguous heap of manure upon old or diseased fruit trees? Does he even scrape natural earth from the vigorous, young, strong-growing part of his orchard to spread it over that corner still cumbered with ancient, gnarled, canker-riddled roots? No—he is not known to fame by the resonant title, statesman—he is only a common gardener. So he stints everything else to give abundantly to the saplings, knowing well that they will recoup him tenfold; that they will thus best escape disease and live to enjoy a vigorous, splendid old age.

Only one more point. All who have done me the honour to listen so far will see that highly as I rate the material value of cadet corps, I put the moral value infinitely higher. But to set upon this cadet training the seal of reality—a mere abstract idea of liability for military service is not enough—no not even when it has been reinforced by school training in real drill with arms, by musketry instruction, and by an annual course of roughing it as real soldiers under canvas. Every boy in Great Britain has been made to realize (let us suppose) by a course of military training that the State may need his help. Every youth reaching man's estate must be vividly once again reminded on the threshold of independent life that the State has first call. This is an idea I have already advocated in my book *Compulsory Service*, but it is so vital to the whole of my conceptions of *National Life and Training*, that I make no apology for pressing it once again upon your attention. The youth of the country should be induced, voluntarily, overtly, in face of all men, to place their lives at the disposal of the State in danger. As the Church confirms

a boy in his religion, so should the State confirm the youth definitely in citizenship ; or, permit him definitely to abjure his political rights. No compulsion. Leave him his old age pension. But do not let a man vote, i.e., take his share of governing a country when he has, in anticipation, refused deliberately to shed in its defence one drop of the thin, ungenerous fluid imagined by him to be blood.

The function whereat the youths of each county would assemble on reaching military age should be distinguished by pomp and solemnity. They should be paraded and inspected by the Lord Lieutenant, and each should then be formally registered by the officials of the Territorial Force County Associations for any military service he might be best capable of rendering in a time of great national danger. The lad might never do another day's State service in his life ; but the idea of State service—of repaying something to the mother who has educated him—would have struck home ; he would thenceforward become a more responsible, and therefore a more independent, prudent, and far-sighted

voter—a voter who would carry about with him the feeling that every fellow-citizen was a potential soldier comrade.

Until we take this step, a vital factor is lacking in our conception of citizenship. Do you well-balanced people of the Midland show the way to the easy-going south, to the preoccupied north, by taking the plunge. To the naked man standing on the swaying end of a spring board looking down on the swift river—cut to the skin by the east wind—how forbidding, how alarming, seem the depths. One brave leap and he comes up to the surface, warm, proud, happy, glorious. Take the header from uncertainty to reassurance, from danger to safety. Take it and you will find that after all it only amounts to the fair, square, public acceptance of an obligation every decent man would eagerly acknowledge did any women ask him. Yet—between facing, and deferring, or shirking that obligation, lies all the difference between a will to lead and a premonition of defeat.

Because the great mass are apathetic ; because the far-seeing minority are disunited ; because some preach voluntary service, some

national service, some compulsory service, some conscription; because of these inevitably divided councils—are we to do *nothing*? And what is there in anything I have urged that need repel the keenest advocates of any of these systems? Have we not discovered here to-night their common denominator?

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